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Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 3, 2025 - Darkness at Noon

APRIL 03RD 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 3, 2025 - Darkness at Noon

Those followers of Jesus who watched the events described in Matthew 27 must have felt like they were in a nightmare. Even though Jesus had told them about His coming death, this was not how they expected the story to unfold. Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion were horrific enough. But from noon until three in the afternoon, "darkness came over all the land" (v. 45). Modern readers are intrigued by the phenomenon. What caused this darkness? Was it an eclipse? A storm? Did some kind of supernatural fog envelop the area where the crucifixion took place?

Matthew does not give us details about the cause, perhaps because the language he uses provides enough of a clue to identify its ultimate source. The story of Israel's Exodus tells how the Lord caused "darkness" to descend over the land of Egypt, which lasted for three days (Ex. 10:21–22). Similarly, the prophet Amos spoke of a day when the Lord would "make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight" (Amos 8:9). Matthew frames it as a theological rather than a meteorological event. The darkness is evidence that a great judgment has taken place.

Verse 46 notes that after three hours, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” With this quotation of Psalm 22:1, Jesus not only identifies Himself with the suffering it describes (see v. 18), but also with the hope of resurrection promised in Psalm 22:22–31. At the moment of Jesus’ death, the curtain of the Temple was torn from top to bottom and a great earthquake split open the tombs “of many holy people” who “were raised to life” (v. 52). The earthquake occurred as Jesus spoke His final words, but the resurrection of these saints probably took place after that of Jesus (v. 53).

What conclusion did the Centurion and those who were with him draw from all these events, according to verse 54? What do you think persuaded them?

The darkness, the earthquake, the pain, the suffering—Father, the narrative of Your Son’s death is difficult. But we know that the Cross leads to resurrection. We praise You for this truth, which changes everything.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 31, 2025 - A View of the Promised Land

MARCH 31ST 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, March 31, 2025 - A View of the Promised Land

Johann Sebastian Bach is one of the greatest composers of all time. While he was regionally famous as an organist and technician in his lifetime, he was not well known for his work as a composer. But about one hundred years later, his music was rediscovered by Felix Mendelssohn. After this, Bach achieved worldwide fame and acclamation.

Moses' life goal since he met God at the burning bush had been to lead Israel to the Promised Land. He had spent forty years wandering in the desert and led the people right to the cusp of a land that he would never get to experience himself. As an act of grace, God allowed Moses to glimpse the Promised Land before his death (v. 4).

In some ways, much of the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) can be viewed as a biography of Moses. We are first introduced to him in the account of his miraculous deliverance at birth (Exodus 2). He has been the main human character

throughout the rest of Exodus–Deuteronomy. We have seen him learn and grow into his role. As D. L. Moody memorably put it, “Moses spent forty years thinking he was a somebody; forty years learning he was a nobody, and forty years discovering what God can do with a nobody.” Certainly, after he killed an Egyptian and fled for his life, it did not look like he would amount to much (Ex. 2:11–24). Yet, God called him to lead His people out of Egypt.

Throughout it all, Moses was a faithful servant (v. 5). He was not perfect, but he led Israel, revealed the Law, and pointed people away from himself and to the Lord. His life pointed beyond himself to a future Prophet and Redeemer who would do for Israel and the rest of the world what Moses could not—provide forgiveness of sin and new life in the Spirit (Acts 7:37).

What can we learn from the life of Moses? What are your key takeaways from the book of Deuteronomy?

Thank You, Father, for the lessons we’ve learned this month from the book of Deuteronomy about love, obedience, faith, justice. Thank You for the freedom we have in Christ—“not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 16, 2025 - Consequences, Consequences

MARCH 26TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 16, 2025 - Consequences, Consequences

Ceremonies often mark important transitions in life. High school graduation marks a transition toward adulthood. Marriage celebrates the start of a lifelong union between a man and woman. In Deuteronomy 27, Moses looks forward to a significant transition for Israel—they would cease to wander in the desert and take up residence in the Promised Land.

To mark this occasion, Moses outlined a dramatic ceremony. After writing out the Law publicly on stones coated in plaster, half of the tribes would ascend Mount Ebal and half would ascend Mount Gerizim (vv. 12–13). From Mount Ebal, the tribes and Levites would recite the curses of the covenant if Israel

was unfaithful. From Mount Gerizim, the tribes and Levites would pronounce the blessings of obedience. In Deuteronomy 27, the focus is on the curses.

Curses were pronounced against those who violated clear standards the Lord had established. The curse was not operated by magic. Rather, it was a pronouncement with which God would judge. A common thread here is that these were all actions that could be done in secret: worshiping an idol in one's home (v. 15); moving boundary stones (v. 17); misleading a blind person (v. 18); oppressing the foreigner, widow, or orphan (v. 19); various sexual sins (vv. 20–23); murder (v. 24); and bribery (v. 25).

The Lord desires His people to live holy lives, not just in public when everyone notices but also in private when only the individual and the Lord might know about it. Ultimately, Israel failed to keep the covenant. As Scripture clearly teaches, “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). The message of the gospel is that what Israel could not do—and what we cannot do—the Lord has done for us: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13).

How does this passage demonstrate God's view of sin and disobedience? What challenge does this give us about so-called “private” sin?

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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 24, 2025 - Do to Others

MARCH 24TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, March 24, 2025 - Do to Others

Did you know that in Alabama it is illegal to make a person in church laugh by wearing a fake mustache on Sunday? In North Carolina, it is illegal for a bingo session to last more than five hours! This is a sample of laws that are technically still on the books, but no longer enforced.

Deuteronomy 22:1–12 contains a series of laws that may seem irrelevant to believers today. Are Christians supposed to obey these laws? If, as followers of Christ, we are not under the Mosaic Law, why are they still in the Bible? These laws reveal God's character. They describe how God wanted Israel to live within their cultural context. They are authoritative to us as God's revelation. They are a source of wisdom as we reflect on the values on which these laws were founded.

Some laws in this section were given to remind Israel that they were to be a separate and distinct people. They were not to wear clothing of two different kinds of cloth (v. 11) or plant fields with different kinds of seeds (v. 9). These are not moral issues, but they would be a physical reminder of Israel's call to be holy.

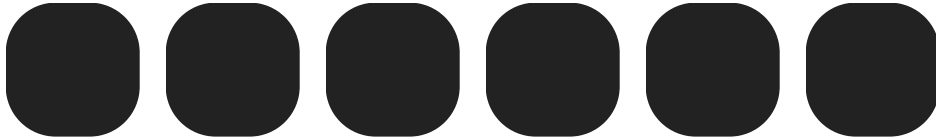
Many laws describe how they should treat others. If you saw an ox or goat wandering, you were to care for it until its owner came looking for it (vv. 1–3). If you saw an animal that had fallen and the owner was struggling to help the animal back to its feet, you were to help (v. 4). There is even a law related to having compassion for wild birds (vv. 6–7).

Jesus summarized the Law in this way to His disciples: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12).

What principles can we take from these laws regarding everyday life? How do they inform the way we treat others and relate to our community?

Though some laws in Deuteronomy seem not to apply to our modern life, You made them all work together, God, to grow a holy people for Yourself. May we see deeper into Your perfect Law, may Your commands give light to our eyes.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 19, 2025 - Do To Others

MARCH 19TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

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